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**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
*Office of the Dean*

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## **PhD PUBLIC DEFENCE**

**The Dean, School of Social Sciences cordially invites you to a PhD Public Defence of the following candidate:**

**Candidate: Mr. NIRINGIYIMANA Julius**

**Thesis Title: “Oil, Politics and Land Conflicts in the Albertine Region, Uganda”**

**Date: Tuesday November 2, 2021**

**Time: starting at 9:00 am**

**Venue: School of Social Sciences Upper Lecture Theatre**

**Supervisors: Professor William Muhumuza**  
**Department of Political Science and Public Administration**  
**Makerere University**

**Professor Murindwa Rutanga**  
**Department of Political Science and Public Administration**  
**Makerere University**

**Note:** MOH Guidelines and SoPs will strictly be observed and a Zoom link will be shared later

## **PhD Abstract**

**by**

**Mr. Niringiyimana Julius**

### **Oil, Politics and Land Conflicts in the Albertine Region, Uganda**

The study investigated how oil politics influenced the changing nature of land conflicts in the Albertine region of Uganda. While available literature suggests that having a strong institutional framework is essential for the effective management of the oil extraction industry and can subsequently enable citizens to benefit from the oil resource and reduce oil-linked land conflicts, this assumption may not hold in circumstances where a neoliberal policy environment is at play and promotes selfish interests of various categories of actors. As a consequence, the legitimate interests of citizens tend to be undermined which triggers what Polanyi termed as a 'counter-movement' in form of conflicts. This reality played out in Uganda's recent oil exploitation in the Albertine region. Notwithstanding the protracted state negotiations with Multinational Oil Corporations (MOCs) and instituting a strong institutional framework, the process has instead been plagued by land conflicts and the dispossession of citizens. The study explained how the different oil interests influenced oil politics, which in turn changed land rights. It also investigated how land rights changes intensified the pre-existing land conflicts and triggered new ones and how they affected people's livelihoods. This study used qualitative research methods, such as a case study design, FGDs, in-depth and key informant interviews. The research established that the interests of actors conflicted and led to the politicization of oil exploitation. The government had to adjust its position to accommodate the interests of MOCs while other opportunistic interests, such as land speculators also took advantage. These actions led to the affected persons to lose their land rights which invoked and intensified land conflicts and negatively affected people's livelihoods. These findings show that where neoliberal capitalism interfaces with an oil-producing state, citizens tend to be dispossessed, and where there are pre-existing land conflicts, the emergence and politicisation of oil not only intensifies them but also produces new ones. To avoid oil-linked land conflicts, there is need for the state to re-assert its interests and obligations to protect people's land rights. The MOCs also need to adhere to internationally accepted benchmarks on how to treat PAPs and surrounding affected communities such as resettlement based on fair compensation and informed consent.